

BLM - Vale District

Baker, Jordan, and Malheur Resource Areas
Project and Planning Focus- 2000

Introduction

This bulletin is the latest in an on-going dialogue between you and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Vale District office. We hope that this Project and Planning focus will increase your awareness of BLM activities and your opportunities to discuss these activities with us. Through this bulletin we hope to continue our ongoing relationship with you. We will publish this bulletin each year to provide updates on our progress. This edition is also posted on our world wide web site (www.or.blm.gov/vale).

Understanding NEPA

What is NEPA? NEPA is the National Environmental Policy Act. When we propose management actions that might affect the quality of the environment, the district uses an interdisciplinary approach to develop alternative proposals, including the proposed action, and to provide environmental analysis (EA) of possible effects of proposed actions. Another important aspect of NEPA is its requirement for public involvement in the planning process.

Categorical Exclusions (CE)

Under NEPA some proposed actions do not require EAs. These are called categorical exclusions (CE). These actions do not individually or cumulatively have significant environmental effects and may be excluded from environmental analysis if they qualify under BLM or Department of the Interior guidelines.

Environmental Assessments (EA)

Some proposed actions require an Environmental Assessment. These are management actions that are not exempted as categorical exclusions and are not covered under an existing NEPA document such as an EA or EIS.

When the EA is completed it is determined whether the proposed action will significantly affect the quality of the environment. If impacts are determined to be significant, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared. If impacts are determined to be insignificant, a Finding Of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be prepared.

Environmental Impact Statements (EIS)

Major federal actions significantly affecting the environment require an EIS. The analysis and resulting document describes an array of management alternatives including the preferred alternative, the environmental impacts of implementing the alternatives, adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided if the proposed action is implemented.

How Can I be Involved?

You can let us know your views and concerns as comments on completed EAs and EISs during the formal comment periods. Resource management within the BLM and other government agencies is process oriented. In order to influence the decision, you must be a part of the process, and the earlier in the process the better. For many of the EAs, this project bulletin and the Vale District Internet website (www.or.blm.gov/vale) may be the only scoping notice you will receive prior to the notice of availability of the EA for public review. If you wish to comment on the proposed projects in the early planning stages, you should contact the designated project coordinator.

The following EA's are for projects that are completed or expected to be completed in fiscal year 2000. A notice is published in local newspapers when each EA is available for review by the public and a date when the comment period ends. A notice will be published in the Baker City Herald or La Grande Observer for EAs completed in the Baker Resource Area, and the Ontario Argus Observer paper for EAs done in the Malheur and Jordan Resource Areas. EAs when completed will also be available for downloading or viewing on the Vale District Internet website (www.or.blm.gov/vale). The website will also provide updated information on the status of EAs and planning documents including those that may not have been anticipated when this document was completed. If you are interested in receiving a copy of an EA or want to get involved in the NEPA process, please contact the designated project coordinator at one of the addresses/phone numbers listed below:

BLM Vale District

100 Oregon Street
Vale, Oregon 97918
(541) 473-3144
7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (MST or MDT)
Monday through Friday

Baker Resource Office

3165 10th Street
Baker City, Oregon 97814
(541) 523-1256
7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (PST pr PDT)
Monday through Friday

An update on the status of these EAs will appear in the next Project and Planning Focus.

Malheur Resource Area

Environmental Assessments Planned for 2000

Name: North Fork Malheur River Landscape Area Project

Contact: Tom Dabbs, Natural Resource Specialist

Location: North Fork Malheur River Geographic Area encompassing 125,000 acres of public land west of Vale, Oregon

Description: Resource assessment and management plan for the North Fork Malheur River Geographic Area. Will include grazing permit assessment and renewal as well as projects and management prescriptions to meet resource objectives within the landscape area.

Target Date: Winter 2000

Name: Ring Butte Diatomite Mine and Mill

Contact: Bill Holsheimer, Geologist

Location: Ring Butte, near Westfall, Oregon

Description: Development of Diatomite open pit mine and processing facility

Target Date: Summer 2000

Name: Ramos Electric Power Line

Contact: Jon Freeman, Realty Specialist

Location: East of Owyhee Reservoir, T. 22 S., R. 45,46 E.

Description: Construction of electric power line to serve a FM broadcasting station

Target Date: Fall 2000

Name: Owyhee Ridge Complex Communication Site Plan

Contact: Sheldon Saxton

Location: East of Owyhee Reservoir

Description: Management plan to guide use and development of communication plan

Target Date: Fall 2000

FY 99 EA Status Update

Willow Creek Canal Fence: EA/Decision record completed 6/10/99

Stockade Butte Electric Fence: Ea/Decision record completed 10/7/99

Bully Creek Landscape Area Project: EA/Decision record completed 3/16/2000

North Fork Malheur River Land Exchange: Carry over to 2000

Malheur Assembled Land Exchange: Carry over to 2000

Jordan Craters Road, Community Gravel Pits: EA/Decision record completed 9/26/99

Snake River Sportsman Shooting Range patent: EA/Decision record completed 12/22/99

Monument Peak Communication Site Plan: EA/Decision record completed 10/12/99

MJ Fence: EA/Decision record completed 2/25/99

Bully Creek Initial Riparian Projects: EA/Decision record completed 9/30/99

Lincoln Emergency Fire Rehabilitation: EA/Decision record completed 8/10/99

BAKER RESOURCE AREA

Environmental Assessments Planned for 2000

Name: NOALE Land Exchange

Contact: Jon Freeman, Malheur Resource Area, Realty Specialist

Location: Morrow, Umatilla and Wallowa counties

Description: Land exchange involving multiple parcels

Target Date: Fall 2000

Name: Haberman Road Right-of-Way

Contact: Steve Davidson

Location: T. 7N., R. 46E., sec. 27, lots 14 & 17; sec. 28, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$. Along Grande Ronde River in Asotin County.

Description: Authorize continued use and maintenance of existing primitive road.

Target Date: 2000.

Name: Beamer's Landing Land Sale

Contact: Steve Davidson

Location: T. 7N., R. 46E., sec. 12, lot 6. Along Snake River in Asotin County.

Description: Sell .65 acre of land to resolve long-standing inadvertent unauthorized use.

Target Date: 2000

Name: Voiles Land Sale

Contact: Steve Davidson

Location: T. 8S., R. 42E., sec. 28, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$. Off Ritter Loop Road in Keating area.

Description: Sell about 10 acres of land to resolve long-standing inadvertent unauthorized use.

Target Date: 2000

Name: Travel Information Council of Oregon Recreation & Public Purposes Lease

Contact: Steve Davidson

Location: T. 9S., R. 41E., sec. 6, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$. On Highway 86 below Flagstaff Hill.

Description: Authorize installation of large interpretive sign along highway.

Target Date: 2000

Name: Oxbow Landing Boat Ramp Permit

Contact: Steve Davidson

Location: T. 7S., R. 48E., sec. 22, lot 2. Along Oxbow Reservoir.

Description: Authorize continued use and maintenance of existing boat ramp and adjoining small recreation site.

Target Date: 2000

Name: Carter's Landing Camp Site Permit

Contact: Steve Davidson

Location: T. 8S., R. 48E., sec. 8, lot 1. Along Oxbow Reservoir

Description: Authorize continued use and maintenance of small existing camping area.

Target Date: 2000

Howard Creek Road Right-of-Way

Contact: Steve Davidson

Location: T. 3N., R. 40E., sec. 23,26,35,36. Rondowa area.

Description: Authorize use and maintenance of existing primitive road for access to private land.

Target Date: 2000

Name: Level 3 Communications Fiber Optic R/W (OR-035-00-01)

Contact: Kata Bulinski

Location: Along I-84 corridor through Union, Baker, and Malheur counties

Description: Authorize right-of-way for fibre optic line

Target Date: Spring 2000

Name: Spring Recreation site vault toilet

Contact: Vicki Kellerman

Location: Oregon side of Brownlee Reservoir approx. 3 miles from town of Huntington

Description: Remove an existing vault toilet and replace with a new one

Target date: 2000

Name: Copper Creek Vault Toilet

Contact: Vicki Kellerman

Location: Oregon side of Hells Canyon Reservoir approx. 5 miles downstream from Homestead at the end of the Oxbow-Homestead Road.

Description: Place a vault toilet on site where none previously existed

Target Date: 2000

FY 1999 EA Status Update

R/W to install River Monitoring Site: EA/ Decision Record completed

Lime Hill Communications Site Plan: Carryover to 2000

City of Irrigon R&PP Conveyance: New Target Date is Fall, 2000

Lookout Mountain Forest Health Project: New Target Date is Fall, 2000

Vale District Integrated Noxious Weed Control Program: New Target Date is June, 2000

Lime Hill Area Coordinated Activity Plan (ACEC): New Target Date is Spring, 2000

Snake River Quarry Free Use Permit: EA/Decision Record completed

South Fork Walla Walla Bridge Replacement: EA/Decision Record completed

Oasis Prescribed Burn: EA/Decision Record completed

Oregon Trail Vegetation Management Plan: New Target Date is 2000

Rattlesnake Forest Health Project: New Target Date is Summer, 2000

JORDAN RESOURCE AREA

Environmental Assessments Planned for 2000

Name: Sage Creek Fish Barrier

Contact: Cynthia Tait, Fisheries Biologist

Location: Zimmerman Allotment

Description: Construct a weir with ODFW to block passage of undesirable fish.

Target Date: Summer, 2000

Name: Indian Canyon West Pasture Fence

Contact: J. R. Epps, Rangeland Specialist

Location: Willow Creek Allotment

Description: Build a pasture division fence.

Target Date: Fall, 2000

Name: Whitehorse Allotment Cross Fence and Grazing System

Contact: J. R. Epps, Rangeland Specialist

Location: Whitehorse Allotment

Description: Fence construction and grazing system adjustment

Target Date: Fall 2000

Name: Louse Canyon Geographic Management Area (GMA) Assessment

Contact: Tom Miles, Rangeland Management Specialist

Location: Louse Canyon GMA encompassing 521,451 acres of public land east of McDermitt, Nevada

Description: Resource assessment and evaluation. Will include grazing permit assessment and renewal as well as projects and recommendations to meet resource objectives within the GMA.

Target Date: Winter 2000

Name: Coyote Lakes Wild Horse Gather
Contact: Jim Johnson
Location: Coyote Lakes and Alvord/Tule Wild Horse Herd Management Areas
Description: Gathering of excess Wild Horse
Target Date: Fall 2000

FY 99 EA Status Update

Antelope Pipeline Cantor Pit: New Target Date Fall, 2000

Name: Dry Creek Fences and Pipeline Extension: EA/Decision Record completed

Name: Castro Spring Wetland and Coburn Creek Riparian Fence: EA/Decision Record completed

Name: Whitehorse Butte Well: EA/Decision Record completed

Name: Cowgill Prescribed Burn: This project has been canceled

Name: Willow Creek Dike and Road Realignment: EA/Decision Record completed

Name: Birch Creek Fuel Tank Relocation and Replacement: EA/Decision Record completed

Name: McDermitt Complex Undesirable Species Control: New Target Date September, 2000

Name: Southern Trout Creek Habitat Maintenance: New Target Date September, 2000

Name: Macaroni Spring: New Target Date September, 2000

Name: Sand Springs Wild Horse Herd Management Area Gathering: EA/Decision Record completed

Name: Blue Mountain Guzzler: EA/Decision Record completed

FY 98 EA Status Update

Jordan Craters Barriers and Sign Installation: Project canceled

Cow Lakes Recreation Site Improvements: On-hold due to higher priorities

Corbin Creek Well Development: Carried-over to 2000 with new target date of 9/2000.